

Serial No. 09/804,246

Docket No.: 1573.1003

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on respective displays means of each the terminal devices together with message sender identifying information of persons who ~~send~~ sent the messages; and

a table means for storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons using said virtual communication spaces, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons using said virtual communications spaces; said character trains ~~are being~~ used as said message sender identifying information; and

means for determining a part of said character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for a designated one of said identifiers of the person, in accordance with an association of said designated identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with the part of said character-train information in said table means.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1 wherein said table ~~means contains stores~~ different character-train information for the identifier of a ~~same one~~ given person for use in respective different ones of said virtual communications spaces.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein said table ~~means contains stores~~ different character-train information for the identifier of a ~~same~~ given person for use in communications with respective different persons.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein said plurality of terminal devices use said table ~~means~~ in common.

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5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein the character-train information stored in said table ~~means-is~~ accessible from said respective terminal devices.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein character-train information to be stored in said table means is ~~set~~ sent through terminal devices from which said messages are transmitted.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein said network is formed of said plurality of terminal devices and a server, and character-train information to be stored in said table ~~means-is~~ set in said server.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1 wherein said message sender identifier is converted into the character-train information at the terminal device which ~~has received-receives~~ the message.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system, comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices each having a display and forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in said server ~~for-and~~ storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons using said terminal devices; and

a search means-device disposed in said server ~~for-and~~ searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when said server receives said identifier of the message sender and a message from said message sender, for transferring said character-train information together with said message, wherein said search means determines said character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said character-train information in said table.

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10. (ORIGINAL) The chat system according to Claim 9 wherein said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces; said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said sender identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

11. (ORIGINAL) The chat system according to Claim 9 wherein said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated; said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:
a server;
a plurality of terminal devices having corresponding displays and forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons using said terminal devices, in association with each other; and

search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device receives said identifier of the message sender and a message from said message sender, so that the character-train information is displayed together with the received message on said display means of said terminal device, wherein said search means determines said character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said character-train information in said table.

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13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices having corresponding displays forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons using said terminal devices, in association with each other; and

search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device transmits said identifier so that the character-train information is transmitted together with the message, wherein said search means determines said character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said character-train information in said table.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 12, wherein;

said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 13, wherein;

said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and identifier.

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16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 12, wherein:
said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages
designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train
information for respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the
message sender and the message receiver.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 13, wherein:
said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages
designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train
information for respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the
message sender and the message receiver.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use in and readable by a
terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form with a server a
network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from
each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network,
the messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display means of each terminal
device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the
messages; ~~said record medium being readable in each of said terminal devices;~~ said record
medium ~~including~~ comprising:

a table means for storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons
who use the chat system, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding
character-train information; and

search means for searching said table means for character-train information
corresponding to the identifier of a person who is going to send a message and outputting the
character-train information sought, as said message sender identifying information, for
transmission with said message, wherein said search means determines said character-train
information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the
person, in accordance with the association of said identifier of the person and an identifier of
said one virtual communication space with said character-train information in said table.

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19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 18, wherein:
said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated
one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table means-has stored therein different character-train information for the
respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces;
and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the
designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 18 wherein:
the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said
message designated;

said table means-has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information
corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the
message sender and the message receiver.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use in and readable by a
terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form a network, said
terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other
through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the
messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display means of each terminal device
together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages; ~~said
record medium being readable in each of said terminal devices;~~ said record medium
including comprising:

a table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system,
identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information,
in association with each other; and

search means for searching said table ~~means~~ for character-train information
corresponding to the identifier of the message sender received through the virtual
communication spaces and outputting the character-train information, as said message sender
identifying information, for display on said display ~~means~~, wherein said search means
determines said character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication
spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with an association of a
corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual
communication space with said character-train information in said table means.

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22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 21, wherein:
said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated
one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table ~~means~~ has stored therein different character-train information for said
identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the
designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 21, wherein:
the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said
message designated;

said table ~~means~~ has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information
corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the
message sender and the message receiver.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use by and readable in a server
of a chat system, wherein said server forms a network with a plurality of terminal devices, said
server being adapted to allow said plurality of terminal devices to transmit and receive messages
to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on
the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each
terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the
messages; ~~said record medium being readable in said server~~, said record medium
including comprising:

a table ~~means~~ for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and
character-train information corresponding to said identifiers, identifiers of said virtual
communication spaces; and corresponding character-train information, in association with each
other; and

converting means for searching said table ~~means~~ for character-train information
corresponding to the identifier of the message sender sent together with a message by any of said
terminal devices and outputting the character-train information for sending it together with said
message to a given virtual communication space, wherein said converting means determines said
character-train information to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said identifier
of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers
of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said character-train

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information in said table means.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 24, wherein:
said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated
one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table ~~means~~ has stored therein different character-train information for said
identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the
designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to Claim 24, wherein:
the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said
message designated;

said table ~~means~~ has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information
corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the
message sender and the message receiver.

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27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system, comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who sends the messages;

a memory having stored therein messages in association with identifiers of persons using said terminal devices; and

a table storing therein said identifiers of the persons, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, in association with each other, and

converting means for converting a designated one of said identifiers of the persons stored in said memory to a predetermined character train and causing said display means to display the character train, wherein said converting means determines said predetermined character train to be used in one of said virtual communication spaces for said designated identifier of the person, in accordance with the association of said designated identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with a corresponding part of said character-train information in said table.

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 27, wherein:
said network comprises a plurality of terminal devices and one server, and said memory is provided in said server.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 27, wherein:
said memory is provided in each of said terminal devices.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 29, wherein:
said converting means is provided in each of said terminal devices.